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NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 37

ZONE OF PEACE AND COOPERATION OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC:

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/531)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.25)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.25.

Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria): Since 1986, when the General Assembly by a solemn declaration established the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the international community has continued to give moral and material support towards the realization of the objectives of the zone.

Member States of the zone have, for their part, sought to advance their cause at various meetings, including two high-level meetings of the zone. Recently, they met here in New York to review their cooperation in the light of the new and evolving international situation. They concluded that changing structures and postures in international relations since the end of the cold war had engendered a renewal of confidence in multilateralism. They therefore saw in this new international situation the continuing validity of their regional association as a relevant and viable instrument of multilateral cooperation among them, and as a forum that contributed to the promotion of international peace and security. They issued a declaration in this regard further to reaffirm their commitment to the purposes and objectives of the zone. They also agreed to avail themselves of the structures and competences that already exist in member States in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, environmental and developmental fields.

The full text of that Declaration has been circulated to Member States in document A/48/581 of 9 November 1993. With respect to implementing aspects of the Declaration, it is gratifying to note that a meeting of the zone's ministers of trade and industry will commence in Windhoek, Namibia, in two days' time. We look forward to continuing the implementation of the Declaration when the third high-level meeting of the zone takes place in Brazil in 1994. With a forward-looking perspective, States members of the zone, linked culturally and geographically by the Atlantic Ocean, also plan to negotiate an appropriate instrument on marine protection as a complement to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and as a follow-up to the relevant part of Agenda 21, particularly its chapter 17.

The States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic consider the prevailing international environment to be particularly propitious for the full cultivation and development of zonal cooperation. In the area of nuclear disarmament, a good prospect for turning the South Atlantic into a nuclear-weapon-free zone is provided by the Argentina-Brazil initiative leading to the full entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America; and a good prospect for progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the African continent is

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provided by the imminent conclusion of an appropriate multilateral instrument.

On the political front, the statutory end of apartheid in South Africa can only create further opportunities for unhindered multifaceted cooperation between all countries in the region of the South Atlantic. For that reason, the countries members of the zone look forward with optimism to the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The aim of the adoption of Agenda 21 at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 was, *inter alia*, to conserve the environment, the ecological balance and living marine resources. We are therefore pleased to note the expression of the international community's political will further to strengthen cooperation in the conservation and management of living marine resources, as demonstrated during the meetings of the intergovernmental United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks that took place here in New York in July 1993. As an earnest of our intention to contribute to the enabling process, the States of the South Atlantic have considered the possibility of negotiating in the short run an appropriate instrument on marine protection. The intergovernmental United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, to be concluded in 1994, can only ease the way for a regional agenda in that area.

Those are a few of the possibilities and opportunities that States members of the zone would like to capitalize on in order to further the purposes of the zone. But even as we nurture our hopes for peace and progress within the zone, we are saddened by the persisting situations in Angola and in Liberia. The support of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has counted for much in the efforts to end all hostilities in those two countries. We would like to urge the international community not to relent in those efforts, and to continue to provide increased humanitarian assistance until the conflicts in Angola and Liberia are resolved and normalcy returns to the affairs of those two countries.

In introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.25 on behalf of States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, I should like to point out that in its preambular paragraphs the draft resolution has drawn substance and language from resolutions 46/19 and 47/74, which were adopted in 1991 and 1992 respectively. The operative part repeats some of last year's operative paragraphs, and also reflects some key developments that took place in 1993, notable among which are the Declaration made at the 1993 ministerial meeting of the zone, held at New York, the progress made in the drafting of a treaty to denuclearize the African continent, the agreement reached between the Governments of Namibia and South Africa on the transfer of Walvis Bay and the offshore islands to Namibia, and the proposal for negotiating an appropriate instrument on marine protection as a complement to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and as a follow-up to Agenda 21.

The draft resolution takes care not to lose sight of issues that have relevance to the achievement of the purposes and objectives of the zone. In that connection, it has taken into particular consideration the various sensitivities and perspectives that lead us to believe that the resulting formulation now enjoys universal consensus.

In that regard, I should like to make an oral revision to the text of the fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/48/L.25. Our partners in the European Union have kindly suggested to me that it would perhaps be more felicitous to use the pronoun "it" instead of "that" in that preambular paragraph. I have in turn discussed this monumental change with the other sponsors of the draft resolution, and, in a spirit of cooperation and partnership, they have agreed to accept this modification. Thus, the fifth preambular paragraph should now read as follows:

> "Noting the concern expressed on the use of fishing methods and practices that cause the over-exploitation of living marine resources, especially of highly migratory and straddling fish stocks, and that it has an adverse impact on the conservation and management of living resources of the marine environment, both within and beyond the exclusive economic zones".

The States members of the zone, which are also sponsors of this draft resolution, are delighted to commend it to the General Assembly for adoption without a vote.

Mr. de ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil): Since its inception seven years ago, the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic has contributed to fostering cooperation and strengthening peace. It represents an important effort to implement joint projects aimed at promoting the well-being of the peoples of the South Atlantic region.

The establishment of the zone of peace and cooperation represented a recognition by the General Assembly of deep-rooted aspirations of countries on both sides of our ocean. Resolution 41/11 provides the basic framework upon which the countries of the region commit themselves to the promotion of peace and security and to

the enhancement of cooperation in economic, environmental and other matters.

The momentous changes in the international scene have created opportunities which the countries of the zone of peace and cooperation intend to pursue with the cooperation of the international community as a whole.

One of the main objectives of the zone of peace and cooperation is the promotion of peace and security. Unfortunately, serious areas of tension continue to exist within our region, putting to risk the future of our African friends and neighbours.

The Brazilian Government is following with great care and attention the evolution of the situation in Angola, a country to which we are linked by very strong ties of friendship and good understanding. We firmly support efforts aimed at bringing about a lasting solution to the conflict, a solution based on the full implementation of the Acordos de Paz and of the resolutions of the Security Council, and on the acceptance of the results of the free and fair democratic elections held last year under United Nations supervision. Brazil looks forward to the day when the Angolan people will be able to enjoy peace, progress and democracy, with the full support of the international community.

The crisis in Liberia has brought great suffering to the people of that African country of the South Atlantic. We welcome and expect the full implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, which brought new hopes for peace to that country. The United Nations must continue to make its important contribution to the efforts undertaken by the African neighbours of Liberia.

On the more positive side, the path towards democracy in South Africa is now irreversible. We are now very close to the definitive eradication of apartheid. The elections scheduled for next year and the recent approval of an interim constitution granting equal rights to all South Africans are clear signals that the courageous people of that South Atlantic country will finally achieve their long-held aspirations for justice and for national reconciliation and reconstruction. We hope that in the very near future we will be able to welcome a democratic, united and free South Africa as a full member of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

One of the most important objectives to be pursued within the framework of the zone of peace and cooperation is the denuclearization of the South Atlantic. We are determined to ensure the achievement of the ultimate goal of abolishing once and for all the risk and threat of nuclear weapons from the region of the South Atlantic. A number of initiatives have been advanced in this respect, beginning with the 1964 Declaration of the Organization of African Unity and the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, initiatives designed to advance the commitment of the countries of the region to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In Africa, considerable progress has been made recently in the drafting of a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In Latin America and the Caribbean, important steps have been taken to ensure the effective implementation of the ultimate objective of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The amended text of the Treaty of Tlatelolco is now in the final stages of the process of ratification by States of the region, so as to enable the Treaty to come fully into force.

The Brazilian Government believes that the effectiveness of the existing instruments could be further strengthened by the elaboration and adoption of a treaty on the denuclearization of the South Atlantic region, and we are currently engaged in studying different aspects of this question.

Brazil attaches particular importance to the environmental aspects of cooperation among the South Atlantic countries. Protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development are goals that have consistently gained support in the South Atlantic region, especially since the Rio Conference of June 1992. We are determined to work towards these goals together with the other members of the zone of peace and cooperation.

In this context, special reference should be made to the work of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The Conference represents a unique opportunity to address the problems related to the conservation and management of living resources. We share the perception that these problems should be addressed by the adoption of a regime for the conservation and management of straddling stocks and highly migratory fish stocks embodied in a legally binding instrument which would serve the interests of the international community as a whole. The Brazilian Government is currently proposing the negotiation among the South Atlantic countries of an agreement on marine protection, in implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and as a follow-up to the relevant parts of Agenda 21. We believe that the consideration of this proposal will give renewed momentum to the zone of peace and cooperation in a matter of particular importance for all South Atlantic countries.

The declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, which was held in New York on 5 October 1993, constitutes a significant step towards the advancement of the purposes and principles of the zone of peace and cooperation. As we announced during that meeting, Brazil has offered to host the third meeting of States members of the zone of peace and cooperation during the second half of 1994. We are confident that the meeting in Brazil will prove to be an effective opportunity to reaffirm the capacity of the zone to fulfil its potential as regards peace and international cooperation.

The need to foster cooperation among the developing countries of our region and the desire for peace in the South Atlantic were at the basis of the establishment of the zone of peace and cooperation. Today, more than ever, these elements remain at the heart of our collective efforts to promote the objectives that were solemnly proclaimed by this General Assembly on 27 October 1986.

Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation endorses the eloquent introduction of draft resolution A/48/L.25 by the Permanent Representative of Nigeria, speaking as coordinator of the members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, and would just like to make a few comments on the zone's significance.

The zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic is important to Uruguay because it is a model instrument for preserving international peace and security and has enormous potential for the future of the post-cold-war world. The zone is also an excellent model for inter-regional cooperation on the basis of legitimate and important interests of developing States that border on the South Atlantic.

The benefits of security and cooperation in this zone could reach beyond the geographical area of the South Atlantic to the whole world. Consider, for example, some of the regional undertakings now under way.

In the area of preservation of the region from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the Treaty of Tlatelolco has now become a virtual reality, with the ratification by Argentina and Brazil of the Treaty and its amendments. Both countries participate in a nuclear-materials control and accountability system, having established a Brazilian-Argentine agency for the purpose, and having also signed a quadripartite safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition, seven countries in the Latin American region have signed the Mendoza Declaration, expressing our commitment not to develop, store or use chemical or bacteriological weapons.

On the other shore of the Atlantic, considerable progress has been made in bringing to fruition a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, thus making possible the longstanding aspirations of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. This progress has taken the form of a draft resolution adopted by the First Committee and entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa" (A/C.1/48/L.19), in which the Secretary-General is requested, in consultation with the Organization of African Unity, to finalize the drafting of a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. In this way, we are establishing all of the conditions that will enable us to achieve our ideal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone that includes both continents.

Concerning the solution of regional conflicts, we look with growing optimism to the positive steps taken towards a permanent solution of the conflicts in Angola and Liberia. In this connection, I should like to point out that the member countries of the zone are making real contributions, in active cooperation with the United Nations and regional bodies, to resolve conflicts that unfortunately persist in the region. This cooperation takes the form of participation in peace-keeping operations or in political processes designed to help resolve existing disputes. For instance, my country is participating in the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), in which we have 20 military observers.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without reaffirming Uruguay's satisfaction with the positive political developments in South Africa. We look forward to the time in the near future when South Africa will be able to become a full member of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

As to environmental protection, operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution before us today deals with the proposal for negotiating an appropriate instrument on marine protection as a complement to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and as a follow-up to the relevant parts of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. My country enthusiastically supports this initiative and is willing to participate actively in developing it in the appropriate forums.

As was stated in the Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting of the countries of the zone, held in New York last October, the zone has enormous potential for horizontal cooperation and for promoting peace and security in the region. This dual approach arises from our

belief that questions of peace, security and development are interrelated and inseparable, as is recognized in the preambular part of draft resolution A/48/L.25.

The responsibility for attaining the objectives of the zone lies primarily with its member States, but because of their scope these objectives should enjoy the full support of the international community. That is why the sponsors of draft resolution A/48/L.25 urge Member States to adopt it without a vote.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.25, as orally revised.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen

Against: United States of America

Abstaining: Bahamas

Draft resolution A/48/L.25, as orally revised, was adopted by 103 votes to 1, with 1 abstention (resolution 48/23).*

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. DONLON (United States of America): The United States would like to take this opportunity to explain why we had no alternative to voting once again against the draft resolution on this item. No change has been made to the provisions which we said last year insufficiently addressed one of our major concerns - that of freedom of navigation, now in operative paragraph 8. In view of the territorial claims of some States in the region, the resolution does not adequately protect the freedom of navigation and overflight or the right of passage through international straits and territorial seas, as established under international law.

My Government also remains concerned that the underlying resolution of 1986 purported to create an internationally recognized zone of peace by General Assembly resolution. That concern is not addressed by the current resolution. The United States believes that zones of peace can be created only through multilateral negotiations between the relevant parties. In this case, such negotiations have never taken place.

Our third and final concern is that the resolution refers to a number of issues which, while perhaps not objectionable in themselves - such as developmental assistance and fishing methods - have little to do with the subject at hand.

Mrs. MENDES (Portugal): Portugal supported draft resolution A/48/L.25, which has just been adopted, concerning the zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic.

Portugal has long-standing special relationships with many countries in the region, and we attach great importance to strengthening our links and cooperation with them. We should like to emphasize the importance of providing humanitarian assistance for the countries in the region that are in desperate need of it.

Nevertheless, the resolution continues to present some difficulties for my country, namely with regard to the facts that a clear geographical delimitation of the zone of peace has yet to be established and that the exact nature of the obligations incumbent on the States in question has yet to be defined. We hope that in the future these issues will be addressed.

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 37?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 29 *(continued)*

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/422 and Add.1)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.27)

The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that the General Assembly held its debate on agenda item 29 at its 60th meeting, held on 22 November.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.27.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/48/L.27?

Draft resolution A/48/L.27 was adopted (resolution 48/24).

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 44 *(continued)*

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/536)

Mrs. AL-KHALED (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic):* My delegation wishes to extend its appreciation to Mr. Eliasson, for his efforts in the area of humanitarian emergency assistance.

My delegation has considered the Secretary-General's report (A/48/536), and thanks the Secretary-General for this very informative document. We also wish to reaffirm our unwavering support for him as he tries to coordinate humanitarian emergency assistance.

The international community faces unprecedented challenges in the area of providing humanitarian emergency assistance. In many instances, such assistance is provided under very difficult conditions to the many people throughout the world who have been affected by civil wars and natural disasters. Facilitating the provision of assistance to these suffering people is indeed a very important task.

Since independence, Kuwait has always provided assistance to a number of peoples and countries because of our belief in the principle that assistance should be made available whenever necessary. Despite the bitter tragedy that my country suffered and which almost paralysed its infrastructure, making it impossible for us to live up fully, as we did in the past, to the ideal of applying the principle of providing assistance to those who need it, Kuwait, through official channels at Government level or through informal channels - national organizations and civilian societies - has continued to provide financial assistance and assistance in kind to fraternal and friendly countries.

Kuwait has donated $25 million to Lebanon for those suffering in southern Lebanon from Israeli bombings. We have channelled part of our donations to the rehabilitation of schools and hospitals there. We have also contributed financially - just over $1 million - in order to help those who have been afflicted by the Maharashtra earthquake. In addition, we sent assistance in kind to people who needed it in Bangladesh.

The United Nations is doing a great deal to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. Sometimes, the results of such efforts fall short of expectations, which is understandable. However what is really deplorable is that some of those disasters are man-made and that such man-made disasters which cause such economic and social losses and such human suffering are the handiwork of repressive regimes that trample the most basic of human rights. Kuwait has provided assistance to people in the southern and northern parts of Iraq in cooperation with the Iranian Red Crescent and, in addition, some of our national organizations have provided assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to our brethren in Somalia.

There can be no doubt that the consequences of disasters are devastating for the countries that experience them - especially developing countries, which are particularly affected by disasters because they already face acute economic problems. With respect to the long-term impact of such disasters, it is not just a question of providing emergency assistance; follow-up action must also be taken to ensure those countries' long-term development.

My delegation would repeat what was said by the Secretary-General in his report (A/48/536): namely that the problem of emergency assistance and rehabilitation must be one indivisible whole; that aid must not be incompatible with long-term assistance for development, and that emergency assistance must not make the country

receiving the assistance dependent over the long term on such assistance.

It is important to consolidate cooperation amongst the various United Nations agencies that deal with emergencies so that assistance may be coordinated effectively. If such cooperation is lacking or insufficient, the necessary response to emergency situations will be slow.

My delegation looks forward to the results of the Conference that will be held in Yokohama in May 1994, where policies on dealing with disasters can be further refined.

We appreciate the work accomplished by those providing emergency assistance. It is also very important, however, to deal with man-made disasters. For example, the fratricidal wars in Somali, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other countries also require that the United Nations face up to these conflicts, because people must not be dragged into wars that bring them even greater suffering at the hands of repressive regimes.

Mrs. FRITSCHE (Liechstenstein): When the Assembly adopted resolution 46/182 in December 1991, few could have predicted the number, magnitude and complexity of humanitarian crises that the United Nations has since had to address.

It is a sad reality that calls for humanitarian assistance have never been as numerous as they are now. In the almost two years since its establishment, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has faced 108 natural disasters and 26 complex emergency situations.

My delegation would like to pay tribute to the effective leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and to the efforts he and his team have made to meet these challenges. I would like to reiterate to Mr. Eliasson my Government's complete support and cooperation.

The cost of humanitarian assistance is a necessary burden on the international community. As outlined in the comprehensive report by the Secretary-General (A/48/536), the funds which are at the disposal of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in order to deal with these crises are the result of consolidated inter-agency appeals, special pledging conferences and consultative meetings with donor countries. In addition, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund enables the Emergency Relief Coordinator to respond rapidly to relief requirements. We note with satisfaction that experience with the use of this Fund has been positive and encouraging. However, the financial regulations regarding the operation of the Fund at times make quick disbursements difficult. My delegation therefore encourages the review of these regulations by the Secretary-General. We furthermore wish to underline the desirability of considering the expansion of the Fund's scope, as its utilization has so far been limited to organizations of the United Nations system.

Humanitarian and political issues are often linked, and we believe that humanitarian diplomacy has an important role to play in promoting conditions conducive to political dialogue. Political tensions can be defused through humanitarian assistance, thereby contributing to the promotion of peacefully resolving a conflict.

Access and appropriate conditions for relief organizations are a prerequisite for humanitarian work. Humanitarian diplomacy can also be used to remind States of their responsibility to provide access to populations in need.

Because conflicts within a country often do not stop at its borders, United Nations personnel are more vulnerable than ever. The protection of relief workers is of particular concern to my delegation. Increasingly, humanitarian work is facing difficult security conditions, and, regrettably, at times even protection by military contingents is required. This is a very dangerous and very unsettling trend. Within United Nations agencies, Red Cross organizations and non-governmental organizations, many lives have been lost in tragic incidents. We regret and condemn all actions taken against relief personnel. It is simply unacceptable that humanitarian relief workers should become targets while trying to help others.

Humanitarian assistance is often hampered by the presence of land mines. The removal of these mines is now part of humanitarian relief assistance, in cooperation with the respective United Nations peace-keeping presence. We note with satisfaction that this particular problem has been addressed by the General Assembly, and we welcome resolution 48/7 regarding assistance in mine clearing.

Humanitarian relief work must be adapted to the environment. In times of war, environmental considerations regrettably pale into insignificance. It is understandable, of course, that under such circumstances, priorities change, as the population concerned has to deal with more pressing problems. It should therefore be of particular concern to humanitarian relief agencies to try to keep possible environmental damage to the absolute minimum.

The problem of ethnic and religious strife, which often results in internal conflicts or even civil wars, is also of particular significance to humanitarian emergencies.

Instead of dealing with the symptoms, we must attack the root causes themselves. We believe that a new approach to dealing with this type of situation is urgently needed. If we look at the challenges the United Nations is facing in this field, it becomes evident that preventive diplomacy through confidence-building measures, fact-finding missions and - especially in the context of humanitarian assistance - through early warning, is a most timely concept.

The United Nations has ensured effective and timely assistance in many instances, but much remains to be done. This can only be achieved through shared responsibility by Member States.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Since its inception, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has had the most challenging task of dealing with a plethora of emergencies in the form of both man-made and natural disasters. These emergencies overstretched the capacities of the newly formed Department even before it could prepare itself from an organizational viewpoint to deal with the complexities of each disaster systematically and in accordance with its mandate. Despite the multifarious demands, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and his Department have responded to emergencies in a dedicated manner. The Department's overall coordinating role has been evident in all international emergency situations.

The Pakistan delegation would especially like to express its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his commitment and perseverance. No one can better understand the Department's overall objectives and the magnitude of its tasks than can Mr. Eliasson, who chaired the working group that elaborated the specific structures and the role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

It was generally acknowledged that there was a need to rectify the piecemeal and sporadic manner in which emergencies had been dealt with in the past by the international community, both by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It was widely accepted that the United Nations system had a responsibility to act rapidly wherever an emergency occurred. It was this urgent need for a United Nations coordinating mechanism to provide policy guidance and develop strategies for dealing with emergencies in any part of the world that led to the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. As envisaged in resolution 46/182, the Department must have a recognized leadership role in emergencies and, for this purpose, the full confidence of the United Nations and non-governmental agencies involved in such emergencies.

The proliferation of emergencies over the past few years, especially man-made disasters caused by war and civil strife, underscores the importance of the role which the United Nations must play in preventive diplomacy and socio-economic development. We are convinced that some of the present-day political disasters could have been averted if there had been greater resort to the instruments of negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement envisaged in Chapter VI of the Charter.

Undoubtedly, the United Nations faces "a crisis of excessive expectations", but it is the only organization that can offer hope to nations and peoples locked in strife and overcome by turmoil. It must again be emphasized that it is through sincere implementation of the decisions of the United Nations, especially the resolutions of the Security Council, that we can expect, in the words of the Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and thus fulfil the primary purpose for which the United Nations was established. Certainly, the tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina could have been avoided if the world community had not tolerated the flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions by the aggressor and if the Council had taken more vigorous action to implement its own resolutions.

The humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues, with the onset of winter, to deteriorate. This is an example of a complex emergency in which the role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in coordinating international help for the Bosnian people will be critical to their survival. The people of that unfortunate nation look to the United Nations to keep open the channels of sustenance by means of relief convoys and airlifted supplies.

The chaos and turmoil that have affected so many parts of the developing world in recent years also underline the vital importance of promoting economic and social development as a means of averting humanitarian emergencies and also of overcoming such calamities when they happen. The volume of emergency assistance has increased, since 1991, from approximately $700 million to over $3 billion. However, most of these resources represent a diversion from development assistance. Without development, there is a danger that civil order and peace will disappear in many parts of the world; without development, many of the current emergencies may become even more prolonged and cruel.

The reason for creating the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was to ensure the coordination of assistance from all organizations involved in emergencies. The Department's activities will have to be promoted in

conformity with the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182. As Baroness Chalker of the United Kingdom observed, the Department was not formed to act on the ground in an emergency, but to ensure that, working together, the United Nations agencies delivered the relief so sorely needed. This coordination role can be enhanced through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. That Committee, chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, should serve as the primary, action-oriented mechanism for inter-agency coordination of policy issues relating to humanitarian assistance and for the formulation of a coherent and timely United Nations response to major complex emergencies.

With regard to the field level, resolution 46/182 identifies the role of the Resident Coordinator as that of coordination of humanitarian assistance activities. The Resident Coordinator's effectiveness in performing this specific function can be assured by the strengthening of his role and relationship with respect to emergency relief organizations in the field. With fragmented and uncoordinated activities by specific sectoral agencies without the overall coordination of the Resident Coordinator it would be difficult to achieve the purposes for which the Department was conceived. Under strong leadership, all agencies can be expected to ensure a coherent and coordinated response in an emergency. It is only through the strengthened role of the Resident Coordinator that prevention through development can be assured.

Since its launching, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has been a vital mechanism for the provision of immediate financial assistance for emergencies pending the preparation of, and response to, a consolidated appeal. It is therefore essential that the Fund should continue to receive contributions and retain its revolving nature. The Emergency Relief Coordinator should be allowed complete flexibility in the disbursement of the Fund's resources for effective damage control in the first 48 hours of an emergency, which is when most lives are lost. The Secretary-General's concern about the non-availability of resources for implementing agencies and about the delay caused in the preparation of consolidated appeals leading to a liquidity crisis is certainly legitimate and needs to be carefully considered, taking into account the principles underlying a consolidated appeal as enunciated in resolution 46/182.

The role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a focal point for policy coordination and resource mobilization for determining programmes is essential in ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance in conflict and post-conflict situations. This role is of great interest to Pakistan. Most countries affected by the problem of uncleared minefields lack the expertise required to clear and neutralize unexploded mines. United Nations agencies can be of immense help by setting up institutional mechanisms for the exchange of information and know-how as well as in the training of personnel in mine-clearance techniques. We understand that the Department's coordination activities are relevant in areas where mine-clearance is essential for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

My delegation fully shares the Secretary-General's concerns about the security of personnel engaged in humanitarian activities. The continued violence against those involved in both peace-keeping and humanitarian functions must be strongly deplored. Attacks against United Nations personnel and aid workers are outrageous and constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law. Those who have lost their lives or who have been wounded in trying to bring hope for survival to those living under siege or in hunger cannot be forgotten by the international community.

We agree with the Secretary-General that both short- and long-term strategies need to be considered to enhance the security and safety of personnel involved in peace-keeping and humanitarian operations. Theirs is a noble task, critical for the saving of human lives in an international climate of recurrent and widespread regional conflicts and crises. Notwithstanding the dangers inherent in their occupation, they continue their work with courageous commitment.

To conclude, my delegation would like to express its full support for the work done by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson. Needless to say, the success of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs could not have been achieved except for the strong commitment and political backing of the Secretary-General. We fully concur with Ambassador Albright that the leadership of the Secretary-General will determine whether the United Nations system provides a smoothly coordinated response to humanitarian crises.

Mr. SELOMA (Botswana): We wish to pay a special tribute to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and all organs of the United Nations system for a job well done in providing a coordinated response to the drought emergency situation in southern Africa. Botswana is one of the countries gripped by the drought that has been ravaging the subregion since last year. The timely, coordinated and coherent response of the Department has demonstrated the validity of General Assembly resolution 46/182. It has been proved that the leadership role of the Department is

absolutely vital for the development of effective mechanisms to respond to all emergency situations.

With the assistance of the United Nations, the emergency drought situation that paralysed the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) met with a generous response and support which helped avert a near disaster. Out of this collaboration, Botswana has been able to strengthen its policies regarding future responses to drought, the main thrust of which is the incorporation of drought preparedness into regular long-term development programmes. It is encouraging to note that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has demonstrated its intention to continue collaborating with us in designing and strengthening policies for disaster prevention and preparedness.

The drought situation in my country seems likely to remain the same for the foreseeable future. Earlier this year, we carried out a thorough analysis of the extent and impact of the drought, and the results indicate that the situation is not likely to improve in the near future. The international community is no doubt aware that Botswana has a long history of erratic rainfall. This year again the country is experiencing deficient rainfalls. We are at present well into the rainy season but there is no indication that the spell will be broken.

Most unfortunately, a large part of the population relies predominantly on agriculture. Close to 80 per cent depend on both pastoral and arable farming. The generally deficient rainfall experienced this season has resulted in less hectarage being ploughed than usual. Output is below normal. The consequence has been food shortages throughout the country. As a result, on 27 July 1993, His Excellency the President, Sir Ketumile Masire, declared a nation-wide drought emergency for the 1993 to 1994 season, and appealed to the international community for assistance. The widespread crop failure has significantly eroded incomes based on arable agriculture, on which the majority of our people depend. There is therefore an absolute necessity for the international community to come to our rescue and once again help combat the drought situation. The volume of financial and other resources for assistance needs to be increased. In addition, we call upon the United Nations to channel additional resources to the agencies currently involved in helping the country cope with the emergency situation.

Mrs. DA CRUZ (Angola) (*interpretation from French*): I wish first of all, to express my delegation's appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations and to congratulate Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson on the excellent presentation of the document.

Indeed, the resurgence of armed conflicts and natural disasters which affect vast regions of our planet and millions of human beings bespeak the need to increase humanitarian aid and enhance its effectiveness in order to make the best and most rational use of the resources made available by the international community.

In adopting resolution 46/182 the General Assembly responded to an urgent need and established coordination instruments which, according to the Secretary-General's report, "have proved to be essential and useful" (*A/48/536, para. 1*). In the specific case of Angola, the establishment by resolution 46/182 of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has contributed to the rapid implementation of important decisions designed to mitigate the difficult and complex humanitarian situation in which the country finds itself at the present.

The humanitarian situation in Angola has seriously deteriorated because of the resumption of the war by the UNITA rebels in October 1992, which devastated huge productive zones and destroyed social infrastructures, displacing 3 million Angolans from their homes and depriving them of all their property and of health services and lodging.

The economic and financial situation of my country, emerging from a violent and prolonged war which has lasted for more than 30 years, is weak; the Government is not in a position to tackle on its own the resumption of production activities and the social reintegration of displaced persons. In this effort, it is counting on the generous support of the international community, particularly the United Nations agencies - the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) - the non-governmental organizations and several Governments. On behalf of the Republic of Angola, my delegation thanks all these organizations most sincerely for their expressions of human solidarity.

We note in the report of the Secretary-General that, despite the generosity of the international community, the contributions received up to now in response to the United Nations appeal for humanitarian assistance to Angola is still far from satisfactory, meeting only 20.37 per cent of the needs. We therefore encourage the IASC to study new financing machinery and new strategies for the

mobilization of resources for humanitarian-assistance programmes. We request that the General Assembly give positive consideration to the proposal for an increase in and expansion of the participation of other international organizations in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) established by resolution 46/182.

The prolonged drought that struck the southern part of Africa in 1991 and 1992, compounded by the effects of the war that has been destabilizing the countries of the region in recent years, posed a great challenge to the coordinating capabilities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and to cooperation between the various operational agencies in effectively meeting the crisis. Thanks to that joint effort and the generous support of the international community, which quickly responded to the United Nations appeal, and to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the contributions of the region's Governments, it was possible to avoid what could have been one of the continent's greatest famine crises.

In this connection, preventive measures must be taken, through the establishment and strengthening at national and regional levels of structures capable of taking action in the most vulnerable areas. The Yokohama World Conference will afford an opportunity for a more in-depth study of future measures to reduce the impact of such catastrophes.

The security of the personnel and *matériel* involved in emergency operations is fundamentally necessary to guarantee that such aid reaches those who need it. Armed attacks on humanitarian assistance teams must be strongly condemned and their authors held responsible. This question is particularly sensitive for my country, in view of the armed attacks by the UNITA rebels against United Nations teams, the diversion in July of a World Food Programme aeroplane on a humanitarian mission in Uige Province and the attack against a convoy of vehicles transporting foodstuffs and medicine intended for displaced persons in Benguela Province in August. Mines along lines of communication are a further obstacle to the distribution of humanitarian assistance.

The development of demining programmes like those employed in recent years in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Mozambique must be expanded to include the Republic of Angola. We call upon the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to make efforts to that end.

Mr. SOH (Republic of Korea): Humanitarian assistance is an area that has gained prominence in the post-cold-war era. It is a clear way for humanity to express its desire for peace and stability. The delegation of the Republic of Korea supports the humanitarian assistance activities of the United Nations and other related organizations.

In my delegation's view, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been ably fulfilling its mandate in the coordination of responses to an increasing number of complex emergencies and natural disasters. Through the establishment of institutional arrangements and the strengthening of such financial mechanisms as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and consolidated appeals, the Department strengthened the foundation for work in the field of humanitarian aid. My delegation supports the agreed conclusions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session last July, and believes that every effort should be made towards their full implementation.

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretariat for the well-documented progress report (A/48/536), which contains useful information on humanitarian emergency assistance. My delegation would like to make some comments on that report.

The first comment relates to the coordination between emergency-assistance organizations. Given the fact that emergency situations keep growing without adequate resources to cope with them, increased efficiency is the key. Coordination can help to provide efficiency and accountability in emergency assistance operations. Therefore, the leadership and responsibility of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, as the coordinating organ, should be further strengthened and the role of each operational organization clarified. Inter-departmental coordination between United Nations political, peace-keeping and humanitarian activities is also important. My delegation pays special attention to the inter-departmental coordination described in the report, which took place during the involvement of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in United Nations fact-finding missions to Somalia, Liberia and Rwanda. Field-level coordination between the Resident Coordinator and the Disaster Management Team should also be reinforced or, where necessary, established to ensure a timely response to emergency situations, particularly cases of complex emergencies.

Next, my delegation agrees that the approach of linking humanitarian assistance to development will result in the effective performance of these activities. In this regard, the concept of a continuum for humanitarian aid, extending from relief to development, has come to the fore. National efforts are needed to facilitate all aspects of this continuum. My delegation welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat to elaborate the continuum concept in the forthcoming agenda for development. My delegation was pleased to learn from the recent letter of Mr. James Speth,

A ..inistrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), that the UNDP is undertaking an in-depth study on the theme of the continuum through a group of highly qualified consultants. My delegation welcomes that initiative and suggests that, if possible, more consultants from developing countries be included in the group.

My delegation welcomes the decision of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to establish a task force to develop policy recommendations concerning the continuum. The report notes that the World Bank, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) considered this issue and took action in a number of emergency situations to integrate rehabilitation activities into humanitarian activities. That approach should be further strengthened and expanded in the activities of other relevant organizations. The suggested setting up of a specific fund to finance the continuum could be considered after the policy recommendations of the task force have been put forward and studied.

The next issue that my delegation considers to be very important is the safety of relief personnel. Such personnel, who often work in unstable and hazardous circumstances, deserve our highest praise as well as care. The death of relief personnel in the line of duty is particularly tragic. Acts of violence against relief personnel must be wholly condemned, and action must be taken to secure the safety of relief personnel. My delegation wishes to refer to the Final Declaration adopted at the International Conference for the Protection of Victims of War, held in Geneva from 31 August to 1 September 1993, which urges, among other things, that necessary measures be taken at the national, regional and international levels to secure the safety of relief personnel. My delegation also welcomes the consideration by the Sixth Committee of the legal aspects of the security of those engaged in peace missions, including humanitarian relief assistance.

In this context, my delegation agrees that the virtually ubiquitous presence of mines poses a direct and great threat in most of the areas where relief personnel operate. The presence of mines not only threatens relief workers but also hampers the resettlement of displaced persons and the resumption of normal life. As we believe that mine clearance is a critical issue that should be given priority, my delegation co-sponsored the resolution on mine clearance that was adopted on 19 October. My delegation advocates the inclusion of mine clearance in consolidated appeals for countries with mine-pollution problems.

Turning now to the management of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, I should like to say that my delegation is encouraged to learn of the Fund's positive impact. We hope that it will continue to have a solid financial foundation and that it will, indeed, be utilized by the operational organizations of the United Nations system. On the basis of the experiences of the past year, we believe that the management of the Fund should be improved. Accordingly, we support in general the flexibility that is proposed in the report.

Finally, my delegation supports the view of the Economic and Social Council that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be provided with regular budget staff and administrative resources commensurate with its responsibilities. The humanitarian crises in the world are increasing in number, in magnitude and in complexity. According to the report, the United Nations is involved in 26 countries, trying, with an appeals aggregate of $4.6 billion, to meet the needs of approximately 58.5 million people. Given these overwhelming figures, the United Nations must be provided with the means to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

With regard to the strengthening of the staff of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, there is a need for further expansion in the area of secondment from intergovernmental organizations, national agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan): I should like to express to the Secretary-General our appreciation of his comprehensive and informative report contained in document A/48/536 and of his continuing interest in the provision of assistance to Afghanistan.

I should like also to commend the work of Mr. Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, in bringing the dire humanitarian and economic needs of Afghanistan to light and in launching a number of appeals to meet the immediate needs of our war-torn country.

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, as the United Nations system's focal point for humanitarian concerns, has provided adequate emergency humanitarian assistance to needy countries. My delegation is more than encouraged by the fact that a number of positive steps have been taken through the implementation of resolutions 46/182 and 47/168, both of which are entitled "Strengthening . of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations".

Furthermore, we commend the current efforts to provide special programmes of economic assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia, Sudan, Angola and Nicaragua, as well as my own country - Afghanistan - and the strengthening of international cooperation and coordination to mitigate and minimize the consequences of Chernobyl and other major disasters. Regrettably, however, there has so far been an unsympathetic response to the three consecutive consolidated inter-agency appeals for emergency assistance for Afghanistan launched by the Secretary-General since 5 June 1992.

The delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan believes that there is a direct link between, on one hand, peace and prosperity, which are among the main objectives of the United Nations Charter, and, on the other hand, emergency humanitarian assistance for countries in need. When a nation or a region is faced with a sudden man-made or natural disaster, that unforeseen situation gives rise to the potential for instability.

The inescapable link between humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping is addressed clearly in the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace", which was published last year as document A/47/277. We also support fully the reference, in paragraph 108 of the Secretary-General's report, to the emphasis on the fact that the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development is a fundamental principle of a coordinated multilateral response to humanitarian emergencies.

The provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to needy peoples around the globe is not just an obligation but a sacred humanitarian mission. As the United States Ambassador rightly said in the course of her statement during the debate on this item, what is at stake is life or death for blameless children, grandparents, mothers and fathers. Truly, their fate depends upon our choice.

We commend the financial and technical assistance provided by the United States, as well as by Japan, to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and we encourage others to follow the example of those two countries.

Political conflicts may eventually find solutions, and the need for programmes of economic development may diminish. However, there will always be a need for emergency humanitarian assistance to mitigate the consequences of natural or man-made calamities. That being the case, it is the view of my delegation that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should continue its mission and should be equipped with a modern information system encompassing all emergency requirements.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan is the inheritor of an unprecedented crisis. To illustrate the situation in my country, I shall quote from the Secretary-General's appeal of 5 June 1992:

> "Few countries in history have suffered to the extent Afghanistan has over the past 14 years. Aside from the physical destruction, which was often nothing short of cataclysmic, the results of the war include over a million people killed, over two million disabled, nearly six million refugees in neighbouring countries and two million internally displaced persons."

The Government of Afghanistan, with extremely limited and scarce resources, faces the major task of rebuilding a country whose economic and social infrastructure is totally destroyed. As is mentioned in paragraph 139 of the Secretary-General's report, the creation of conditions for peace and a stable environment in complex emergency situations is an immense task. Efforts have to be made to alleviate the major problems with which we are confronted. The restoration of social and other basic services - for example, transport, communications, roads, health provision, education, housing and shelter, electricity, water and sanitation - is what we are primarily concerned about.

Moreover, we must ensure and facilitate the smooth process of demobilization following the armed conflict and reintegrate refugees and displaced persons into society and provide them with opportunities to engage in normal productive activities. The availability of international assistance to Afghanistan is a prerequisite for any practical step towards accomplishing these objectives.

In my country - Afghanistan - the repatriation of refugees is an immense task in its own right. In addition, however, there is the fact that millions of land-mines greet these people as they return to their homes. This inflates the death toll and adds to the already-crippling number of disabled people.

Mr. Pursoo (Grenada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

While having studied existing practical strategies towards the implementation of humanitarian assistance in disaster-stricken regions, we, in line with the observations of Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jan Eliasson, believe that additional resources are urgently needed. Further, we must continue to do our utmost to achieve a measurable degree of success in reducing the incidence of natural disasters by the end of the century. We also believe that the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), blessed with varied expertise, could play a pivotal role in mitigating disaster emergencies whether caused by nature or man made.

The appeal of the Secretary-General of 5 June 1992 was for $179.7 million. Months elapsed and only $59 million was donated in contributions in cash or in kind. Mr. Jan Eliasson last year also made an urgent request for a winter emergency fund of $17.6 million, a request that was not adequately responded to.

While that life-saving assistance is slow in coming the Under-Secretary-General recently renewed his appeal for a further approximately $60 million to cover the emergency needs of Afghanistan.

The Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, and the people of Afghanistan are hopeful that the international community, especially the donor nations, will donate sympathetically and generously.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, while emphasizing the smooth continuum from relief to development, continues to make every effort to improve the security situation in both Kabul and the provinces, thus allowing international emergency assistance to reach the needy areas.

As indicated by the Under-Secretary-General's statement of 16 November 1993, in spite of the occasional security problems in Kabul and some other areas between January and September 1993, the United Nations agencies, supported by non-governmental organizations and coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA), reported substantial progress in the major fields of activity. As stated by Mr. Eliasson, the humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes could have achieved even more if additional funds had been made available.

To give an immediate added impetus to this development process the UNDP between November 1992 and June 1993 prepared an Action Plan for the immediate rehabilitation of Afghanistan. The Action Plan, which has already been approved by the Islamic State of Afghanistan, is now published and is available for donors. We believe this is an important step towards effectively addressing the immediate relief, rehabilitation and development needs of war-stricken Afghanistan.

Let me refer to another critical problem, namely, the presence of land mines in my country, a man-made disaster and one of the most serious barriers to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the return of refugees, the resettlement of displaced persons and the resumption of normal life in the country.

According to the consolidated inter-agency appeal for humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, since the inception of the mine-clearing programme in 1990 about 68,000 mines and unexploded ordnance have been destroyed from 29 square kilometres of land. Moreover, the report asserts that if a further 50 square kilometres were cleared most people in Afghanistan could resume a normal productive life. In the view of my delegation the statistical analysis does not seem to be based on the reality of the situation. The presence of mines in Afghanistan in the past has been well documented and reported in the various media, including United Nations-related agencies. It is clearly estimated that well over 10 million mines were planted in Afghan soil.

To point out only one simple fact about the magnitude of the spectre of mines in Afghanistan, an eyewitness who recently returned from Kandahar, which is a southern province of Afghanistan, said that three months ago in the Shahr-i-Naw district of Kandahar two children who were repatriated to their homeland were brutally blown up by the mines that were planted in their homes years ago. So the presence of mines not only threatens the agricultural infrastructure, the traditional productive economic sector of the country, but also endangers human life even in some residential areas.

According to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which administers regular humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan, including mine clearing, the current Afghanistan mine-clearing projects would require $15 million. Unfortunately, only a very modest amount has been donated for the mine-clearing projects currently under way in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I should like once again to express the appreciation of the people and the Government of Afghanistan to all those who have thus far helped us, and we urge others to come forward. We firmly believe that providing immediate international assistance to Afghanistan will have an important impact on the success of the implementation of the reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that the Assembly will consider a draft resolution to be submitted under agenda item 44 at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

AGENDA ITEM 41

EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL (A/48/323 and Add.l)

The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 24 September, the Assembly decided that this agenda item would be allocated to the Second Committee on the understanding that it would be introduced in plenary meeting and considered in the Second Committee.

I now call on the representative of Afghanistan, who will introduce agenda item 41 in the course of his statement.

Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan): For the first time last year, at the forty-seventh session, the General Assembly included in its programme of work agenda item 141, entitled "Emergency international assistance for the reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". That agenda item, as vindicated by its title, was considered and subsequently a resolution that refers to the acute needs of the people of Afghanistan, containing specific measures towards ensuring international assistance, was adopted unanimously. The people of Afghanistan who, during the past 14 years, suffered a war of attrition as a result of the former Soviet Union's aggression, made tremendous human and material sacrifices in the name of Islamic ideals, national pride and integrity. The unanimous adoption of the resolution on the item was seen by the Afghan nation not only as a step forward in the right direction but also as a harbinger of relief from the long years of pain and suffering of the Afghan nation.

Afghanistan, which in its struggle for freedom against the former Soviet Union lost 1.7 million of its population, with over 2 million others disabled, has the right to claim that it made a great contribution to the ending of world bipolarity and of the cold war, and to the collapse of Soviet communism - a mission for the achievement of which the West and the international community were prepared to spend hundreds of billion of dollars.

Certainly, the achievement of those goals was not easy. When the war finally ended in Afghanistan about a year ago the Afghan people expected the free world, and especially this Organization, in appreciation of their great sacrifices, to extend the required humanitarian assistance for the immediate needs of the Afghan people and to provide financial and technical assistance in their post-war struggle for reconstruction.

Since the establishment of the Islamic State, over 2 million Afghan refugees have managed to return to their homeland. These returnees, with the bare minimum of resources at their disposal, have started to rebuild their demolished homes. However, without outside support they cannot and will not be able to restore what is often termed normalcy in life. Before the war ended there was a lot of talk by the United Nations and related agencies, especially by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), about the relief measures taken towards the repatriation and eventual resettlement of Afghans in exile. In reality, the steps taken towards that end have been inadequate, although the efforts of the UNHCR, within its available resources, have been commendable.

Despite the sad plight of the Afghan people, I would point out that during the past year the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed a strategy for assessing the rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of Afghanistan. This strategy, which has now been published and is available to donors, estimates the relief and rehabilitation needs of Afghanistan for the next two years to be approximately $600 million. We consider the preparation of this strategy as a positive step towards the rehabilitation process, and we are thankful for it.

In addition to these facts, the United Nations was given a mandate by resolution 47/119 to dispatch a special assessment team to Afghanistan in order to report on the war damages. Also, an international pledging conference was called for with the aim of raising funds for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. The assessment team was never sent to Afghanistan; nor were arrangements made for the convening of the international pledging conference.

Our dissatisfaction at the limited response to the three inter-agency consolidated appeals of the Secretary-General for emergency humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and at the limited United Nations action towards the implementation of last year's General Assembly resolution should not be construed as a lack of appreciation for the sympathetic endeavours of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mr. Sotirios Mousouris. We greatly value the efforts exerted and services rendered by Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA).

Rather, our dissatisfaction is associated with an awareness of the lack of adequate enthusiasm on the part of donor countries for coming up with generous contributions in support of the rehabilitation process in my country, Afghanistan. Instead they have raised the question of having an adequate security situation as a prerequisite for their provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance to Afghanistan. Granting that security is important for a full-fledged reconstruction programme, I would suggest that a reasonable degree of peace and security does indeed exist in large parts of Afghanistan. In those areas, reconstruction is possible and, if started, could serve as a catalyst in revitalizing the entire Afghan economy. We should also bear in mind that it may not be possible to have full peace and security in the country unless we are able to start the process of reconstruction and to provide the people with productive economic opportunities to make it attractive, and indeed possible, for them to give up their weapons.

The vicious circle of "first security, then reconstruction" or "first economic revival, then security" must be broken if we are to make any progress. In fact, the brighter prospects for military and political security in Kabul have been best indicated by the Secretary-General's statement of 10 November 1993, in which he said:

> "In spite of occasional security problems in Kabul and some other areas between January and September 1993, the United Nations agencies, supported by non-governmental organizations and coordinated by UNOCHA, reported substantial progress in their major fields of activity".

The Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, has also asserted that the humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes could have achieved even more if additional funds had been available. Based on those observations, we ask the international community, the United Nations, and especially the donor nations not to be possessed by the blind rationale of the security dilemma in Afghanistan. Rather, they should be open-minded and far-sighted in their approach to the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

In response to those who condition their granting of assistance to Afghanistan on the creation of favourable security and political circumstances, I am obliged to make the following observation based on some historical realities: The international community has to realize that the aim of the former Soviet Union's military aggression in Afghanistan was not only to place and keep in power a pro-Moscow regime in Kabul: that aggression, which had no parallel in modern history, was part and parcel of international communism's aggressive design - initiated at the beginning of this century - to crush the countries of Central Asia one by one.

Carrying out that design in an Islamic and traditionalist society such as Afghanistan required the destruction and erasing of all values which were in contradiction to Communist philosophy. The first step towards the implementation of this design was the destruction of all our political, social, cultural and religious institutions. In order to weaken the national struggle and *jihad* of the Afghan nation, they resorted to dividing our rank and file, and they fanned the flames of ethnic, religious and linguistic differences. As a result, the national rapproachment and the conciliation, balance and understanding that for many centuries had existed between the various groups were badly affected. As a consequence, one indoctrinated brother took up arms against his countryman.

I mention this historical background as one of the contributing factors to some sporadic skirmishes in and around Kabul in order to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that these incidents, a consequence of such a prolonged war, may take time to overcome. However, in spite of the enormous economic problems and the unpleasant events during the last year, which have hampered some of the Government's efforts at further consolidation of security and normalcy in the country, important steps have been taken towards the evolution of the political process.

Our experience in the past year has led to the conclusion that in order to ensure the carrying out of the national programme of reconstruction Afghanistan requires international assistance, which as I stated earlier is in turn subject to the availability of adequate, relative peace and security.

On the other hand, in the light of the complicated factors, causing instability and insecurity - which in certain cases go beyond our boundaries - the objective, which is to bring about peace and stability, cannot be achieved without regional and international assistance and cooperation. To ensure such international and regional political assistance conducive to the creation of a sound regional atmosphere in which the reconstruction programme could be implemented, Afghanistan amended the title of the item to include normalcy and peace as one of the objectives of the resolution.

It is the expectation of the people and Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan that the following steps will be taken by this Organization.

First, Afghanistan would like the United Nations, as a neutral party, to get involved in providing practical assistance to ensure peace, normalcy and reconstruction. Moreover, because of some security considerations, it has unfortunately been the case that the United Nations, especially in the past year, has not been stationed in our country, but rather has been operating from the United Nations Office in Islamabad. In spite of valuable services, rendered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) and the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP), there seems to be a lack of adequate awareness and understanding of the reality of the situation in my country. This state of affairs has brought about a stalemate in the availability of international assistance for Afghanistan.

In order to break this stalemate, the Government of Afghanistan believes that it is necessary for the United Nations to obtain first-hand information on the reality of the circumstances in the country. Accordingly, we propose that a United Nations special mission be immediately dispatched to Afghanistan for the following purposes: to solicit the views of the Afghans on how the United Nations, along with the Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, can best facilitate national *rapprochement* and reconciliation; and to report to the Secretary-General the mission's findings, conclusions and recommendations for further action to be taken by the United Nations to assist Afghanistan in achieving complete peace, normalcy and reconstruction.

Secondly, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is planning to convene, in 1994, a general, free and fair election in the country, or a *Loya Jirga*, which is a traditional grand national assembly composed of the elected representatives of the different strata of the Afghan society. I am pleased to announce that there is a national consensus among the Afghan leaders on the convening of a national gathering that will decide the political future of the country. The Islamic State of Afghanistan has extended an invitation to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations to supervise such a gathering.

In extending that invitation, I have the duty to echo the cries of millions of victims of war and their laments as parents, orphans and widows whose expectations are pinned upon this Organization and the international community. The adoption of effective and practical measures by this Organization will assure the Afghan nation that they are not forgotten by the world community. It would also demonstrate that the international community is ready to assist Afghanistan, thus enabling it to serve once again as a positive element of peace and stability in the region.

Let us remember the provisions of the Charter to which we all adhere, whose purposes and principles include international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights. It is the practical assistance of the Members of this world family that could enable the Afghan people to realize and enjoy their basic right to the better living standard of which they are now deprived.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 41.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.